The Journey (Part 1)

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/29708253.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandom:	Hannibal (TV)
Relationship:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter
Additional Tags:	Alternate Universe - Medieval, Norse mythology inspired, AU, Animal whisperer Will Graham, Hannibal is 30, Mention of Niflheim, Slow Build, First Kiss, Jack Crawford - Freeform, Will Graham-centric, Will is 24, Blood and Violence, Part 1
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of The Journey - Medieval AU
Stats:	Published: 2021-02-26 Completed: 2021-03-11 Words: 11,047 Chapters: 6/6

The Journey (Part 1)

by HowliteandRoses

Summary

Hannibal Lecter of the Lecter clan is a wanted man and has chosen to leave the city. Will Graham is a man from the mountains who ran away from his home. The two meet. Now, is Hannibal as dangerous as the stories say?

Notes

This is the first story I'm posting that I haven't written all yet. I only wrote the first chapter and will add when I find the time and inspiration.

The meeting

The man brushed his thick beard as he stared into the clear water of the river he was sat in front of. He tied his hair loosely before looking at himself one last time. He grabbed his knives next to him and walked a few steps before reaching the fire he had started not long before. Sitting down he waited for the result of his hunt to finish cooking. It took a few minutes before he took the meat and ate his meal. Cooked to perfection, he closed his eyes as he enjoyed the flavor. The kill had been quick and efficient there was no trace of fear in this meat. He ate cleanly then proceeded to wash the bowl he had brought from his last residence into the river. Placing it back into his bag he decided to stay by the fire a little while longer. The sky seemed calmed, at this time the gods were probably feasting as well, no need for battle that would anger the world. He let his bag and knives rest next to him and crossed his arms as he rested his back against the nearest tree. He let his head fall forward and let sleep take over his body.

As said prior, the world was calm except for the soft wind that caressed the trees once in a while. Small animals ran freely in the forest and some dared come close to the sleeping man to go get a drink at the river. They never stayed long knowing to fear the man sleeping peacefully. One large animal had not gotten the memo, however. An enormous stag had ventured close by with a man alongside it. The man, small as he was hid behind trees and watched the sleeping man's stomach go slowly up and down.

"Tsk," the one behind the trees hissed between his teeth.

The stag turned slightly as to acknowledge the noise. The man pointed at the knifes next to the man and made a motion that ordered the stag what to do. He would be better off with weapons, he needed those knifes but knowing he wasn't as gifted as his stag to stealth around he let the imposing animal go. If the man woke the stag would only kick him and he would go back to the ground as quickly as he had stood. The stag walked slowly and silently and grabbed one of the knives in its mouth. As predicted the man woke up but didn't give any time for the stag to react. The animal let out a cry and another blade pierced its tough skin. The knife fell from its mouth and right into the man's hand. He stood quickly and aimed straight for the animal's throat.

"No!" the man behind the trees screamed as he witnessed the scene. "Tsk! Down! Don't kill him!"

The stag retreated as the man spoke.

"C'mere…" the short man said. "I'm sorry, it's my fault… don't hurt him."

"You would rather sacrifice your own life, boy?" the man spoke in a deep accentuated voice.

So he was a man of the city, a warrior… What was he doing out in the woods? The shorter man came out of the shadows and frowned. He wasn't a boy but angering the man further didn't seem like a good idea.

“I was the one who sent him,” he chose to answer.

“Come on boy, get closer. Let me see your face,” the deep voice said.

The shorter man walked slowly, his curly hair falling into his eyes and down his neck as he lowered his head. When he was close enough, he raised his head slowly. He felt the man stare at him. Was this how he would die?

“Not fond of eye contact, are you?”

The question surprised him and made him raise his eyes to meet the other man’s. Maroon orbs stared back at him and the shorter man froze. He had seen him before. This man was definitely from the city and he was wanted. He was definitely going to die.

“Ah… no, I. I prefer not to look someone directly into their eyes. They speak too much,” why was he telling him this?

“Interesting, you are from the mountains aren’t you, boy?” the taller one said as he took a step back and passed a hand through his beard.

“Yes. May I ask what you are going to do to me?”

“Having an animal whisperer with me would help me on my journey, don’t you think, boy?”

“Stop calling me that!” the shorter man shouted suddenly. The stare he got back didn’t make him back down. “I know who you are, I’ve seen your face. The Lecter clan is searching for you, you are a wanted criminal. I will not follow you and if it cost me my life than so be it!”

The other man stopped as his lips curled slightly. It wasn’t enough for anybody to notice but it was there. The man stood tall his head high.

“Tell me your name,” he asked in a softer voice.

“Why would you need that information?”

The other man laughed as he extended his hand.

“My name is Hannibal Lecter,” he said with a polite smile.

The shorter man looked down at the hand and held his breath as he reached and grabbed it. The man didn’t pull, he simply shook it once then waited to hear the shorter man’s name be spoken.

“William Graham… I go by Will,” the shorter said as he pulled his hand back.

“Well, Will,” he said almost testing the name, “I must say I admirer your bravery. Not a lot of men have ever tried to cross me, but I must ask what is a man like you doing here unarmed and defenseless.”

“Not defenseless…”

“Of course, pardon me,” Hannibal looked at the stag who was watching from the trees. “The wound will heal without any real issues; I did not hit anything vital.”

“Yeah… thanks for that.”

“You haven’t answered me. Should I start back the fire?”

The two of them sat down at the fire as Hannibal ignited it again. The shorter of the two still had his guard up. This man couldn’t be trusted.

“You know part of my story, it would only be fair that you reciprocate, don’t you think?”

Will sighed as he looked at his bandaged hands.

“I don’t understand,” he whispered. “Why am I still alive?”

“Will, like I said you are one of the first to ever try to do anything to me, I admirer the effort.”

“You are letting me live because I… because I did something people don’t do?”

“Do I need another reason?” Hannibal said with a toothy grin.

“Like you said, I am from the mountains, but I ran when my father died. I’ve been walking the forest for a few months now,” Will explained.

“And can I ask where you are intending to go?”

“Everywhere… nowhere, I don’t know. Wherever the wind carries me.”

“Come with me.”

“No…”

“Why not?”

“They say you are a merciless killer, following you would be suicide.”

“Would it?” Hannibal said as he stood up and grabbed his bag.

He took both his knives and hooked them on his belt and looked past the river, where a small path had been traced into the ground. He started walking slowly but nothing followed except silence. Will stayed by the fire, his knees held against his stomach. He couldn’t help but watch as the man walked away. He was the image of confidence. What the city had said about the man was horrifying tales so why was he simply leaving? Could he understand the struggle inside Will’s mind? Was this manipulation to get him to join him? If it was… why was it working so well? How did he make Will so curious? Will didn’t have a place to call home anymore, truth was his father wasn’t dead he had only run away because he couldn’t stay anymore. The man, Hannibal, was hypnotizing, and Will found himself not wanting to let him go.

The stag walked slowly to Will and lowered its nose to nuzzle at Will's hair.

"What should I do?" he whispered.

It could have been three minutes or five hours, none of them really knew the time, but soon enough Hannibal started hearing footsteps behind him and gave a small smile as he turned.

"Where are we going?" Will asked, a protective hand on the stag's neck.

"Down south, I've wanted to visit the warmer regions again, what do you think?" Hannibal replied.

"Sounds good. Lead the way."

King of the Mountains

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal stopped to take a deep breath in, his eyes slowly moving as he took in the environment around him. The boy following him with his pet was not making a sound which was a good thing. Walking through the village during evening time would not be easy business if they weren't careful and Hannibal didn't even have to tell him, he was impressed.

"They are eating, we should be able cross at the back," Hannibal whispered almost inaudibly.

"Tsk, go," Will whispered into the stag's ear as he pointed at the path they would take. "If they hear something, they won't suspect an animal," he then said to Hannibal who nodded.

The two watched the large animal walk gracefully between the trees and while it was making some noise the villagers didn't pay it any attention. Hannibal and Will followed right behind and crossed without any problems.

"You've proven yourself to be quite useful," Hannibal said as they walked away from the village perimeters.

"Yeah… I'm trying not to get eaten," Will shrugged as he let his hand pet the stag's back.

"Clever boy."

"I'm not a-!" Will sighed as he shook his head. "Thanks, I guess," he ended up saying as he rolled his eyes.

"We are going to have to do something about your manners, however."

"I'm from the mountains, it's the best you're gonna get. Let's keep moving."

"Indeed."

Hannibal continued on forward as he wondered why the way this boy was behaving was not irritating him more. Men had died by his hands for far less. Why was he different? Intrigued, he let the rudeness of the boy pass without punishment. William Graham was a curious being that Hannibal couldn't wait to decipher. Keeping his face serious and emotionless he continued his journey. The sun was setting and the moon rising slowly. Tonight would be a full moon he could tell. He wouldn't have to stop too much; wild animals would be visible enough. Perfect. Hannibal knew this path like the back of his hand, he had often walked through as a child and he knew that his next stop would be at the twin waterfalls. If they could reach it at mid-day tomorrow, they would have made great progress.

Will watched the older man examine every movement that made the trees move in the forest. The stag next to him nuzzled his head before bowing down. Will climbed on the stag's back as gently as he could to not hurt its wounded shoulder. The stag didn't seem to be in pain

which was good. Not really knowing where Hannibal was bringing them, Will had chosen to follow him. The reason seemed unknown even to himself. Did he really not value his life that much? This man was dangerous, wasn't he? He was a killer after all. He was probably only alive because of his… usefulness as Hannibal had pointed out. Will didn't know why his heart seemed to hurt at the thought. Hannibal didn't care about him it was only logical so why did it hurt when Will found proof of it?

The older man probably wondered why he wasn't hearing Will's footsteps after a while and turned. Will saw a hint of surprise in his face before Hannibal turned again.

"Since when have you domesticated this beast?"

"It was back in the mountains. When my people found out I was able to achieve such a thing they wanted him for themselves," Will replied petting the stag's neck.

"I'm assuming this was before your father's passing?"

"What?" Will said before remembered his made up story. "Oh, yeah… yeah it was."

"I am aware that your father is not dead, Will. News travels fast and the death of the mountain king would have reached my ears right as it happened."

Will was silent he didn't know what to say and felt stupid for not thinking of that.

"How could you possibly know my father is the king?" he then asked.

"I've seen him once and you look a bit like him. I wasn't certain but you have just confirmed it," Hannibal said as he leaned on a tree his arms crossed.

Will sighed as he looked down. "Think me a coward I don't care… I won't be king. They can figure it out on their own when dad actually kicks the bucket."

"Is your story about your friend here true?"

"It is…"

"And it's also the reason you ran I presume?"

"Yeah…"

Hannibal smiled and Will's cheeks started heating up for no reason.

"Should I call you prince, your majesty?" Hannibal said his voice soft.

"Oh god, please don't," Will said. "Just Will will do."

"Now, Will, tell me, you know who I am, do you not?"

"Yeah, I know, and?"

"Why have you chosen to follow me if you are scared of me? I can smell the fear on you."

“You can… right, um. I… I’m not sure actually. I guess if you decide to kill me I won’t need to worry about dad finding me again…”

“What if I don’t kill you?” Hannibal asked slowly.

“You will. You’ll tire of me eventually. My usefulness will reach its end one day. Then you will kill me… and eat me.”

“You seem pretty convinced of that course of action, boy.”

“I am. We shouldn’t stop for too long wolves will probably come running.”

Hannibal nodded before starting to walk again. Will looked down and laid his head down. He let the stag follow without guiding it while he closed his eyes. Pressing a hand on his chest he wished for his heart to stop racing. Looking back once in a while Hannibal noticed that Will had fallen asleep and considered stopping for a while. The stag didn’t seem tired and Will seemed pretty comfortable up there, so he continued. The young man needed the rest.

They arrived at the twin waterfalls a bit later then Hannibal had planned. Will got down and walked to the water.

“You don’t happen to have a net, do you? I could catch a few fish,” he asked Hannibal.

“Are you good with a spear?”

“Yeah sure.”

“Go get some branches, I’ll start a fire,” Hannibal said as he took one of his knives on his belt and showed it to Will. “Here.”

Will took the knife and examined it before nodding to himself and walking back to the trees to find a good branch to make a spear out of. The stag bent its neck down to drink while Hannibal ignited the fire. He had to admit that the other two were good company. He watched Will take off his boots and roll up the legs of his pants before going straight into the water. The little shout of victory he let out when he got his first catch of the day made Hannibal smile.

“I got one!” Will said as he walked back and handed the fish.

“Nice catch.”

“Hold on I’ll get another one!” he said with excitement.

Hannibal watched him go as he cooked the first fish. Will quickly brought a second one and sat down next to the man.

“Dad often talked about this place, but I never thought I’d ever come here one day. It’s beautiful.”

The older man smiled as he started preparing the other fish. He surprised himself as thoughts circled his head. If it took places like these to see Will’s eyes light up like this, he would show him the whole world. Leaving Will after he reached the docks was quickly not becoming an option in his head. Hannibal quickly learned that he could listen to him talk all day and he would never tire.

They stayed there, talking, and admiring the view for way longer than intended but Hannibal found himself not really minding. This Will was so different from the one he had met two days prior. He wondered why. He was smiling, laughing, talking loudly and Hannibal couldn’t help but smile with him. They eventually started walking again and only stopped when the night came. It was cold and windy that night. Will curled close to the stag as its breath heated him up slightly. Hannibal found himself taking the one blanket he kept in his bag, it was too small for himself but fitted Will perfectly. He draped it on top of him and leaned against the tree nearest him. The two slept peacefully.

Chapter End Notes

Will should be old enough to realize what he is feeling but as a prince I don't think he would have been allowed a lot of interaction where that sorts of feelings would come up which is why he is so confused.

Hope you liked it.

The City of Wolves

Chapter Summary

Will and Hannibal reach the first settlement they need to go through. Of course, nothing goes as plan and Hannibal is left having more questions than answers.

Chapter Notes

Again, this story is inspired by Norse mythology and I take words, or ideas from it, but the story is taking place in a world where Ragnarök will not happen when its supposed to meaning the Gods are still alive but so are humans. The only way not to get too confused about it is just knowing that this is fiction with hints of mythology. Also I am not an expert on Norse mythology so it's also an excuse to get things wrong.

Anyway, have fun and I hope you enjoy because this is surprisingly fun to write!

It had been a week since Will and the stag had accidently woke Hannibal Lecter and were now traveling alongside him. Will was starting to doubt that Hannibal was as evil as they said and at the same time, he didn't know how to feel about it. A voice inside his head which resembled his father's kept telling him that this was a ruse and that sooner or later he would see the true colors of the killer. But as of now, Hannibal had been nothing but kind to him. Will was used to the polite kindness shown to him because of his status but was never really shown real affection or care just for the sake of it. There was always something else. Ever since his mother had died, no one had truly cared about him. So, when Hannibal was smiling at him or asking his help to cook and fish, or when he would make sure Will was never cold at night, it made Will worry. He worried that he was liking it. He was liking the affection given to him quite suddenly but couldn't help the voice in his head telling him it was all a lie.

They had been walking for a quite a while now and Hannibal had made sure they wouldn't cross any villages or cities but they would have too eventually and now was the time. They were approaching the giant wall guarding the city of wolves. Will had never been this far even with his father. The walls were decorated with chains hanging from the top and draped down as if broken. The stone head of a wolf was resting on top of the wall surrounding the doors. It watched whoever crossed the door and judged silently. Will could only guess that it was to represent Fenrir and a shiver shook his body slightly. His mother had told him tales of the wolf. He took a deep breath before looking at Hannibal who was placing on a cloak.

"Are you sure about this?" Will asked nervously.

“It is our only option, we have to go through,” Hannibal replied as he handed over another cloak to Will. “Put this on and stay close to me.”

“I’ll let you do the talking,” Will said as he pulled the hood tightly on his head.

He was nervous but Hannibal seemed to know what to do. Even after everything he had heard about the man Will trusted his judgment. Will had sent the stag away as they reached their final land destination. They would soon take a boat and Will felt better knowing that the stag would be there once and if he returned. Still fearful, he did as told and stayed close as they walked inside the gates. The city was full and thriving. People were talking loudly; children were running, and everyone seemed to be minding their own business. The two just needed to walk through the city and reach the docks on the other side, simple… Right? Will looked around with interest while making sure he was following Hannibal closely. The older man seemed to know exactly where they were going.

Hannibal’s eyes were moving rapidly as he watched all the city folks go on about their day. It would be best to have no one pay attention to them. If the two of them could pass without even talking to anybody it would be great. Men were drinking in a open tavern close to where they were walking, and Hannibal started walking faster. He didn’t want to deal with the drunks.

“Hey, you look familiar shorty!” Hannibal heard behind him and turned slowly.

One of the drunk men had pulled on Will’s hood and was now looking at him. His eyes locked with the younger man, but he stayed behind not making a move, not wanting to start a fight.

“Sorry, sir. You must be mistaken,” Will said as he tried to walk away from the man.

“No, I’ve seen your face before, I’m sure of it!” the man said. “Oi! You’re the kid they are looking for, aren’t you!” he held Will’s chin up squeezing. “Hah! You’re far from home, prince.”

“No…” Will mumbled. “Don’t.”

“Guar-” the man started to shout before an arm circled his throat stopping his breathing.

Hannibal whispered in his ear before letting him go. The drunk man brushed his clothes slightly with his hand before cursing and going back to his drink.

“What’s going on here?” another man said as he walked closer.

“Nothing, only a small disagreement,” Hannibal replied as he hid Will slightly while he put up his hood again.

“Of course,” the man said as he eyed them suspiciously.

This was close, Hannibal thought. They couldn’t afford to be recognized like this. He nodded to the man before taking a step away. He heard a voice behind him and turned. The sight sent a shiver down his spin.

“Were eating good tonight!” a tall and imposing bearded man shouted as he arrived at the tavern with a cart held by a horse.

Will froze as he looked at the animal laying dead on the cart. Its antlers were enormous and its body black as night only for the blood that was pooling inside the cart.

“No…” he whispered as he took a shaky step forward.

When he saw the wound on the stag’s shoulder, the world around him stopped. He quickly grabbed one of Hannibal’s knives on his belt and rushed to the tall man. He stabbed the man in the side of the neck and pulled the knife out before striking again.

“You’ll pay for this!” Will screamed as tears ran down his cheeks.

Hannibal tried to pull him off but the man next to them struck Hannibal. Covered in blood, Will continued piercing the man’s skin as Hannibal moved quickly and successfully snapped the other’s neck before pulling on Will. He stared directly into his eyes.

“Run!” he shouted at him.

Slightly coming back to himself Will did as told immediately and the two started running. Hannibal heard the people shouting for the guards right away, but they couldn’t stop. Heavily breathing, Will had difficulties keeping up and Hannibal could see it. He saw the arrow before Will did but was too late. The younger man screamed as he fell to the ground. With all his strength Hannibal pulled him up and ripped the arrow from Will’s leg before pulling him along as he ran away from the city. One of the doors were close by and he could reach before they closed it. Arrows flew above his head, but Hannibal managed to evade them. He pulled Will on top of his shoulder and ran as fast as he could until he could find a place to hide. Laying an unconscious Will on the ground he got back to the path where the guards were running and held his knife tightly. He charged at them and fought as hard as he could. He successfully disarmed an archer and used the man as a human shield before striking the next guard closest to him.

“Retreat! It’s no use!” one of the guards said as they started running away back to the city.

Bringing the bow with him he got back to Will and started checking his wound. It hadn’t hit anything important thankfully and it was easy enough to bandage but Will would be in terrible pain for hours after he would wake up. The sky started crying and Hannibal held onto Will’s body praying to any God that would listen to protect his boy.

…

“Will.”

A voice so gentle and comforting spoke into his ear. It caressed the young man’s face and cradled him. He opened his ocean blue eyes and wished he could hear the voice again. The world around him was dark and only a soft blue glow emanating from the horizon created a weak light. He sat up slowly and took in his environment. The melting snow was gone, and a full white coat had taken its place. This was the middle of winter again.

“Will,” the voice whispered in the wind behind him.

The young man stood up and turned his body towards the sound. He couldn’t see anybody. Where even was he?

“Willy, my sweet boy, how much you have grown.”

This time Will turned quickly enough to see the one talking. He felt a pain inside his heart that he hadn’t felt in an eternity. He stared at the woman in front of him and fought the tears from falling.

“Mom?” he weakly asked his whole body trembling like a leaf.

The woman walked toward him and took hold of his hands. She brought them to her face and kissed them before looking into Will’s eyes. The young man stood there motionless.

“Where am I?” he asked nervously.

“This is a place of endings and new beginnings. You must remember the tales I told you as a child. Take a look around you. What do you see?”

Will frowned as he tried to make out what was around him. It was misty, dark, and cold. What kind of place did his mother talked to him about that could resembled this place?

“Think of the old times, before our world,” his mother softly whispered.

“Is this hell?” he asked uncertain.

“Not quite, but close.”

“You talked a lot of the nine worlds… this looks like Niflheim a little bit,” Will said.

“This is not your time to be here, my son,” she said. “You haven’t reached the end yet.”

“I don’t understand,” he said as he shook his head.

“You will later on, Willy.”

The woman was started to fade away before Will’s eyes.

“Mom… wait, I don’t understand…”

“Go back to our world Will, discover the truth,” she said as she became only a voice and as the world grew darker once again.

Once Will turned his head to look around he was back to the world he knew, and he was alone. His leg was bandaged but it didn’t hurt. The skin on his hands below the old bandages was oddly tingly, however. He pulled at his bandages and looked at the markings on the back of his hands. His mother had taught him how to read the runes and he knew what the marking on his hands meant but he could never understand how he had gotten them and why did they

hurt all of a sudden. The symbols were almost pulsing as he traced them. It hurt as if they had just been carved or burned into his skin even though they had been there for a long time. He replaced the bandages and looked down at his leg. The memories finally hit him, and he winced as he tried to move his leg.

“Will,” he heard Hannibal’s voice say as the man rushed to his side.

“Are you okay?” Will asked. “I screwed up.”

“I’m alright, and don’t worry about that. I have another plan. Do you think you would be able to walk? We would need to get to the shore further away, there is another dock.”

“Yeah…” Will sighed.

“I am truly sorry, Will. I wish I could bring your friend back.”

Will closed his eyes for a moment before giving Hannibal a small smile. “It’s alright… he didn’t suffer. It was quick.”

“How do you know?” curious, Hannibal asked.

“I can hear him,” Will said as he stood up slowly. “He’s okay, wherever he is…”

“Good,” Hannibal said, his head filling with questions as Will started walking almost perfectly.

“What are you, William Graham, prince of the mountains?” he thought as he gathered the last of his things before continuing their journey.

New Land

The walk to the second dock was uneventful but Hannibal let Will lead the way so he could keep an eye on him. He had lost his temper back at the city walls and was deeply disappointed with himself. Thankfully, his identity hadn't been revealed even when he had fought the guards so they wouldn't trace him and would probably consider it a random event. Hannibal couldn't tell if the guards had recognized Will, but soon enough they would be leaving the land and would be gone from here.

"Is it still forward?" Will asked after a while.

"Yes."

Having an arrow shot through your upper leg should hurt like hell. Will should not be walking right now. His bandages should have been changed because of the blood seeping through, but Hannibal could see that it was still clean. Will was bleeding heavily at first, and he had applied bandages so Hannibal knew the young man could bleed, but why had it stopped? Was it already healed? This was impossible. He watched the man walk as if nothing had happened. Will was sometime flexing his hand, but other than that he seemed perfectly fine.

When the dock was in sight Hannibal pull up his hood and asked if any of the crew were sailing. He successfully managed to get onto one of the ships that were sailing to an island not that far but far enough from the land they stood on. Will followed without saying a word and with his hood firmly on his head. The two stayed below deck while the crew sailed the sea.

"How is your leg?" Hannibal asked the younger man after they had found a place to rest.

Will pulled at the bandages and showed that, as Hannibal had thought, his leg was almost completely healed.

"I heal fast… always have," he gave as an answer.

"Then why the bandages on your hands?"

"Oh those… my hands are um… marked. My mother always taught me to hide them."

"I see."

Will looked up at Hannibal for a moment. He took in every feature as if trying to memorize them. The man had scars and his long hair and beard gave him the look of a warrior. Only the war paint seemed to be missing from his look. Will wondered if he always looked like this or if this was the disguise he adopted when he escaped.

"Where we are heading, we shouldn't be recognized. I would like to stay a month or two. Planning our next step could take time," Hannibal suddenly said in a low voice as he turned

to look into Will's eyes.

"Sounds good," Will said as he averted his eyes quickly. "I'm sorry for back there."

"There is no need to be, you were angry. It had to be expected and you had every reason to be," Hannibal explained.

"I killed a man," Will whispered, his body shaking slightly.

"Was this your first kill?"

Will nodded quickly as he felt tears burning his eyes. He shook his head not wanting to let them fall and sniffed.

"In this world we live in, Will, killing is mandatory for survival. You prove yourself stronger than this man, don't consider it a kill if it makes you feel this way consider it survival. He had taken a friend from you, an eye for an eye almost," Hannibal said slowly.

"It felt… good. Taking his life felt right. I felt powerful…" Will replied his voice shaking. "It shouldn't…"

Slowly Hannibal let his hand rest on Will's back and moved it slowly in circles. The younger man closed his eyes as he moved his head slowly towards Hannibal until it was resting against the man's shoulder.

"Does that make me evil?" Will whispered.

"Good and evil needs to be forgotten when on the run. What it makes you is a survivor."

…

They arrived during the evening and walked off the ship with the crew. Following the crew, they stepped into a tavern and sat down at one of the tables with the captain who Hannibal had talked to in order to get onto the ship. The old man pushed pints of beer towards them and started drinking his own. The duo did the same after thanking the man.

"You boys are running away, aren't ya?" the old man asked with a smile as he leaned forward.

Hannibal nodded slowly as if testing the man. The old captain laughed loudly.

"Hey don't be shy! That's what people do here. You'll be safe here boys, like the rest of 'em. Ask the villagers they'll help build a warm little home for ya. Stay as long as you like," the old man said. "My brother and I built this place."

Choosing to trust the man Hannibal nodded. Will was still slightly out of it next to him and kept silent.

"We never housed royalty though," the captain said as he stared at Will. "Your king is looking for you."

“I don’t need more than necessary and I’m not royalty…” Will said. “I’m just me.”

“Good! Hey, Bill!” the captain shouted.

“Huh?”

“D’you know if any cabins are being done?”

“One got finished yesterday, we’re waiting for new refugees.”

“Got two right here, wanna show them the place?”

“Alright, boss.”

…

And so, they had a tiny house for themselves inside a small village filled with people with forgotten past lives. The two sat in front of the fire in the middle of the house and ate a light meal given to them by the captain. When the night came, the two went to their bed on either side of the fire and closed their eyes one after the other. Hannibal was the first to sleep.

Will turned and turned for a long majority of the night before passing out from exhaustion. Behind closed eyes, he saw the man he had killed speaking to him, his mouth dripping blood. He saw his father’s troops running after him with spears and torches. He felt arrows going through his body one at the time and finally woke up screaming. When he opened his eyes again, Hannibal was just next to him a hand on his shoulder. Will couldn’t keep tears from falling. He started sobbing as Hannibal laid down next to him. He rubbed his back slowly with one hand, the other slowly caressing his hair. Hannibal embraced him tightly until Will’s breathing evened out. He felt the younger man moved slightly to get more comfortable in his arms. The bed was quite small and uncomfortable, but he still held Will throughout the night.

…

“You must always keep them covered. Knowledge of this by the wrong people will be dangerous and I do not want you to suffer, my sweet boy,” a mother’s soft voice echoed inside the man’s head.

“What do they mean?” the boy replied as he looked down at the back of his hands.

“Ōthalan,” she whispered as she took his left hand. “This was passed down from generation to generation. Only the one with this symbol can and will be king.”

The boy traced the symbol with his finger slowly then looked at his other hand. “This one looks like a wolf...” the boy said.

“It’s the whisperer’s mark,” she explained with a smile as she took his right hand in her own.

“Does dad have that one too?” he asked.

“No, he has the fighter’s mark. Now like I said, Willy, you hide them okay? No one must know,” she said firmly to the boy who nodded once.

She looked at his hands with a sad look in her eyes. The birthmarks were slowly getting darker as the boy aged and she knew she couldn’t hide it to the king for much longer.

“Does James have them too?” the boy asked.

“No, your brother doesn’t have the marks.”

“Why not?”

“The Gods didn’t deem him worthy of being our next king.”

“What if I don’t want to be king?”

“I’m sorry, my child… I’m sorry.”

“Why are you sorry, mom?”

She kissed the wolf mark on his right hand as a single tear ran down her face. “You’ll understand when you will be older, my sweet boy.”

The boy and his mother started fading slowly as the image of a teenager with bandaged hands took their place. He looked down at his mother’s grave standing right next to his brother’s own and let tears fall down as he clenched his fists.

“I’m older now, mom…” he whispered with a broken voice. “Why don’t I understand? Why did you have to go? Both of you…” he whimpered as he knelt in the middle of the two graves and placed a hand on each. “Why did you leave me with him?”

Will opened his eyes slowly. He felt safe as he noticed the two strong arms enveloping his shaking body and moved even closer. He fought to stay awake but eventually his eyes closed, and he could only hope for a dreamless rest of the night.

The Marks

The next morning, Will woke up to the smell of meat being cooked and took a deep breath as he sat up from his bed. He watched Hannibal cook their lunch with a smile on his face. The rest of the night had indeed been dreamless, and Will felt somewhat rested.

“One lady brought new clothes over while you were still sleeping,” Hannibal stated as he noticed Will looking at the neat pile on Hannibal’s bed.

The younger man nodded before changing his clothes, they were soft, and he had to admit that it had been a long time since he had been this comfortable. He went to sit at the table and watched the other man do his things.

“Thanks for yesterday, you didn’t have to do that,” Will said as he leaned on his elbows.

“No problem, did you sleep better?” Hannibal asked. “I noticed that you have a tendency to sleep longer when I’m close.”

“Yeah,” Will said as he looked down, a small nervous laugh coming out. “You said the next part of your plan could take time.”

“Indeed, we’ll stay here for a while before we can acquire some sort of boat to continue our journey,” Hannibal nodded before taking the meat off the heat and putting the stew in two bowls.

“Have you sailed before?”

“I’ve been on a few whale hunting trips in my youth but was never in control of the boat.”

“I watched the men prepared the boats but was never allow to sail. If I’m being honest, I can’t wait.”

Hannibal smiled at him softly. “Tell me about your childhood. How was the royal family?”

Will visibly tensed before looking down at his bandaged hands. “Um… well, I had an older brother. His name was James, he was great. He taught me lots same as my mother. They… they died when I was a teenager. So, it was only my dad and I. Dad being the king, he wasn’t really there much and I had to learn a lot since they wanted me to be the next in line. I missed out on a lot of things I guess.”

“The bandages on your hands, since when do you have them?”

“As long as I can remember,” Will said as he avoided looking at Hannibal.

“You don’t like the look of them, or your family didn’t. Is that why your mother told you to hide them?”

“Something like that…” Will said as he raised his eyes for a second. “How about you? How was the clan?”

“The Lecter clan is the one directing the city and at the same time it is one of if not the most powerful clan. My parents had two children. My sister and I were really close until the murder. Barbarians made their way into the city at night and managed to escape the guards. After days of fighting them, my parents and my sister succumbed to their wounds. I was one of the only survivors of my generation. My uncle took me under his wing and raised me until I could live on my own. Adulthood came quickly and I figure you’ve heard the stories that came out of it.”

“They say you are without mercy, killing everything in your way… eating… people.”

“Seems my reputation follows me,” he gave a toothy grin. “There are choices I needed to make in order to survive outside the walls when I was out in patrol and some of my methods were criticized. I have never ended someone life without it been deserved. People outside the clan started telling stories. I didn’t mind them much, but the clan did. They banned me from the clan and started the hunt.”

“The hunt?”

“Yes, as long as I am alive, they will be searching for me, if I am found the one who will bring my head to the chef will be rewarded.”

Will nodded slowly. “Well, they’ll probably do the same to me, so might as well protect each other.”

“Yes.”

…

A week passed as they slowly got used to live in this small refugee village. Their beds had been moved one next to the other and Will seemed to be sleeping better. One day, when they were stepping inside the tavern, they heard people speak in a corner and walked to them.

“Mind if we join?” Will said as he went to grab a chair.

“Not at all go ahead, we were just talking about you,” one of the women said with a smile.

Will frowned but sat down with Hannibal by his side. “You were talking about us?”

“Yes, the captain came with news yesterday and if I heard correctly you two are in trouble apparently,” she said in a whisper.

“Really now. Might we know what it is you heard?” Hannibal asked as he crossed his arms.

“Well, we all know that you are the missing prince, and you have a price on your head,” she said as she pointed each of them. “But apparently they put Jack Crawford on the case.”

“Yeah, the man’s a legend. If he’s after you, you’re done for,” another woman added.

“Jack Crawford you say, never heard of him,” Hannibal said.

“You haven’t…” Will whispered as he looked down.

“Have you?”

“Crawford is um… he’s a guard for the king. I’ve talked to him before, he’s… something.”

“He shouldn’t find us here, it’ll be okay, you’re save,” Hannibal said as he put a hand on Will’s shoulder.

“They are gonna bring Crawford here… you’ve doomed us,” a younger man said from the other table.

“Jared, stop,” one of the women said firmly. “Excuse my son, he’s a bit paranoid.”

“No, he’s right… we can’t stay here,” Will said as he turned to Hannibal. “We can’t risk the lives of the villagers.”

“We have nowhere else to go for now, Will.”

“Well… we can ask the crew that brought us here, maybe they can… I don’t know, do something?”

“They only go from the island to the mainland, they wouldn’t be able to bring you anywhere else,” one woman said.

“Did anyone say when he was sent?” Will asked.

They shook their heads and Will was silently panicking. He hadn’t thought his father would actually send Crawford after him. And if he had sent him for Hannibal as well did that meant they knew they were traveling together? No, it had to be coincidental.

“We can tell the people and if Crawford gets here, you two can go hide in the forest,” one proposed.

“He’ll find us…”

“Will,” Hannibal said softly. “Take a breath and listen to me. You are safe, okay? Nothing is going to happen to you, Crawford will not find you.”

“He could still find you,” Will whispered.

“Don’t worry about me.”

Will let out a shaky breath as he closed his eyes. “Tell the rest of the village, we’ll run for the forest if that’s what we need to do.”

“I’ll go right away, Jared, with me,” the mother said before leaving.

The remaining woman took hold of Will's hand and looked at him sweetly. She was older then the other two, her beautiful face starting to show real age as the color of her hair was slowly turning light grey. She turned her head toward Hannibal for a moment.

"Could I talk to him?" she asked him.

Hannibal stood up from his chair and went to the bar. He watched the interaction from afar. Will looked up at the old woman slowly.

"What mark do you have?" she whispered as soft as she could.

Will quickly took his hand back and stared eyes wide open. "What are you talking about?"

"Don't make a scene, people will get suspicious," she whispered.

Will turned slightly to the few people in the tavern including Hannibal at the bar and gave a little nod and a smile before turning back to the woman.

"Ma'am, I don't… I can't talk about this," he whispered.

"Call me Diana," she said with a smile.

"Will…"

"Now, Will, I know this is a secret and your secret is safe with me, but I am wondering if this is why Crawford is after you."

"I don't know," he said as he straightened up.

"I knew your mother before she became queen," she said. "She talked of legends and about the old world nonstop. A good woman she was."

Will nodded as he lowered his head.

"She also talked that she had this dream. She would have a child. A gifted child. With markings of their own. But she was sad when she talked about that dream. She kept saying that the markings were a curse. She kept saying that it could have the child killed if she didn't do anything. But she wanted the child. She dreamed of holding this child close to her heart and make sure they would be safe from the world. The next time I heard of her, her oldest son and herself had passed. Leaving only the future king. And now I see the bandages on your hands. You are marked, aren't you? You are this gifted child from her dream."

Will looked at her with interest before looking down at his right hand.

"Mom used to tell me tales of the old world of the Gods as well. She often told me stories about the nine worlds," he explained slowly.

"Tell me."

“I saw her recently… in a dream, I think. I was shot by an arrow and I lost a lot of blood. I remember the pain but all of a sudden, I was in another place. It was full of mist, it was dark, and cold. I saw her, she talked to me.”

“You couldn’t have been where I think…”

“I know. The nine worlds are closed off from us. We can’t get in… only *they* can.”

“Yes…” she sighed. “Does your friend know?”

He shook his head slowly.

“Well, if there is one thing I know is that your mother was never wrong. So, when Crawford comes knocking, you better be gone. I’ll cover for you if it comes down to it. It’s the least I can do,” she smiled softly. “And tell him. He really cares about you; I can see it.”

“You haven’t heard who he is then.”

“No, I have. I’ve heard the stories of the cannibal serial killer but as long as I haven’t seen him in action, he is innocent in my book.”

“He’s told me of the things he did. Why the reputation started,” Will explained.

“But you stayed with him,” she added. “You are two runaways; you don’t have to stay together.”

“I know, I… um.”

“You want to stay with him.”

“He’s kind to me, I don’t know if he has any sort of motivation behind it all, but…”

“You care about him.”

“We are victims of circumstances in a way… I understand why he… It’s survival, not murder.”

“Tell him, young man,” Diana said with a smile. “I’ve seen the way he looked at you, the only motivation I see is a caring one and I am trained to see these things. Comes with the age.”

Will smiled and breathed a laugh.

“Do you trust him?”

“He saved my life… he cares for me. I… I do,” Will said as he raised his head to look directly into the woman’s eyes. “I do trust him.”

She placed a hand on his forearm and smiled softly. “You remind me so much of your mother.”

Will smiled, his eyes were shining as he thanked the woman. He then turned to Hannibal and stood up. Hannibal finished his conversation with the bartender and left the tavern after a goodbye to Diana.

“We need to talk,” Will whispered when they got to their little house. “But we need to make sure we are completely alone and that no one can hear us.”

“Let’s wait until the sun as set and the village sleeps, only animals will be witnesses.”

Will nodded. He needed all the courage he could get but he knew Hannibal had to know if they wanted to escape Jack Crawford. They waited until the dark hours and sat one in front of the other on the side of their bed. Will took a deep breath and began.

“I was always very close to my mother, then a bit less close to my brother, then came my father. My mom really cared about me, she cared about all of us, but she seemed more protective of me. She used to always check our hands each night and I didn’t really understood why. She also talked a lot about the worlds of the Gods. It seemed really important to her. When I was maybe ten or eleven the birthmarks I had on the back of my hands started getting bigger and darker. James had them too, but they were just birthmarks and he only had like a tiny one on his left hand, I think. Mom started bandaging our hands when James was fifteen and I was fourteen.

She told me that the marks that was growing on my hands were symbols. The one on my left represented the crown, it was passed down from king to king, generation to generation. Then the one on my right… I didn’t know why but it always made mom cried when she looked at it. She explained to me that it was the whisperer’s mark. My father had the fighter’s mark.

My mother and my brother passed when I was in my late teenage years. The doctors said they fell ill really quickly, and since I was more often with my dad, because at that point they had figure that James didn’t have the markings, I never got to say goodbye.

I learned what the marks meant later on. Each has some sort of power. The fighter’s mark is the mark of the kings. It’s the highest ranking one in a way. It means power and knowledge. It means that the one bearing the mark will be a great king. The one I have… is the lowest ranked one apparently. I know it has something to do with animals, and I’m guessing it’s the reason I can still see them after they have passed or at least the reason why they are really friendly to me. It’s not a skill you need to be king but… they need me for the next generation.

I learned a little bit before I ran that the reason, they want me to be king is to find a queen and make sure a better suited king will be born… They will raise the kid unlovingly until he is of age and I will no longer be needed. They’ll probably have me killed by then. They told the people that my father missed me, that I ran away from my responsibilities and that the people want me to be their king. They don’t. They are all lying.”

Hannibal took in the information as he slowly nodded. He placed a hand on Will’s wrist as the younger man moved to undo the bandages.

“You don’t have to show me, knowing can be enough for me,” he told him softly.

“No, I want you to see them,” Will replied as he pushed Hannibal’s hand away gently.

He took a deep breath before undoing the bandages on his hands. He started with the left hand and showed the first symbol: the rune then took the other bandage off and showed the wolf to Hannibal’s soft maroon glare. The older man took hold of his hand and passed his fingers on the mark. It did look like a birthmark but extremely detailed. He brought the hand to his face before landing a small kiss on top of it. Will’s turned red quickly but stayed silent.

“I understand the secret and the need to hide it, but please do not be ashamed of it. It is as beautiful as the rest of you,” he said against his skin.

Will looked down and closed his eyes as he asked: “You don’t think less of me?”

‘Of course not,” he whispered as he let the hand go. “I swear that Crawford will never get to you. For as long as I live, you will not return to the mountains for the reasons they want you to. The day you return will be the day of your reckoning.”

“Will you be by my side?”

“Always.”

Will gave him a soft smile as he put his arms around Hannibal and rested his head on his chest. Hannibal reciprocated and Will felt a small kiss been pressed on his head. Feeling brave, Will raised his head and kissed Hannibal’s cheek before nuzzling in his neck. Hannibal smiled as he pulled slightly away and pressed kisses on Will’s forehead before kissing between his eyebrows, his cheek, his jaw, his nose then waited as he stayed just above his lips. He let one hand cupped Will’s cheek in a soft caress. Will breathed in the air melting around them and finally closed his eyes and closed the distance between them. The kiss was soft, almost shy as the two testing the new territory. Will grabbed at Hannibal’s shirt and pulled him slightly closer.

“Please let this be real,” Will whispered as he moved away slightly.

“As real as it can be, my love.”

Will’s body shook at the word and pressed his lips harder on Hannibal’s as the older man let his body hit the bed softly. Will fell to the side but they continued their soft kissing. Eventually Will gave a small smile as he let his head rest against Hannibal’s chest. Hannibal worked on putting the bandages back on Will’s hand before resting next to him. The next morning, Will woke up first and was surprised that he had slept this much, he had never slept this well before.

Jack Crawford

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

"I told him," Will said as walked next to Diana in the outskirts of the village.

"That's good, did it go well?" she asked as she sat on a log that had been placed there as a bench.

He sat next to her and nodded. "Yeah," he laughed softly, "it went pretty well."

"I'm glad," she smiled at him. "We've talked to the rest of the village and they will cover for you when the time comes. The forest is pretty big so you should be able to hide. We will try to get the material to build a boat soon."

"You don't have to do all of this, you know," Will said. "We are strangers to all of you, we've only been here a week."

"Everyone who steps and stays on our island is family to us, we are happy to help you."

"Thank you so much…"

Will stared into the forest for a while before the woman told him she would be going back. He nodded but stayed where he was. After a while when he could see everyone being busy with their own lives, he stood and walked into the forest. He leaned on one of the massive trees and closed his eyes. He waited for a second before feeling a warm breath on his neck. Turning his head, he came face to face with the stag and smiled.

"Hey, buddy," he whispered before raising a hand to pet the animal.

The beast lowered its head to let Will reach.

"I miss you."

Will checked the wounds the stag had and winced slightly. "Are you sure it didn't hurt you?"

The stag nodded and Will sighed. "That's good."

Quickly enough the stag raised up and turned its head before walking toward the deep forest. Will followed right away. He was led to a path with little to no trees and watched as the stag disappeared for a moment. Curious, Will walked to the middle and looked around. The stag arrived back from the other side this time with a pack of wolves behind it. Taking a step back, Will tensed slightly but tried his best to stay calm. The wolves surrounded him, they seemed ready to strike.

"Are those your friends?" he asked the stag before turning in a circle to watch the wolves. "Hello, guys. I'm not here to hurt you, I'm friendly."

The wolves relaxed as the biggest one sat down. The rest followed. Will walked to the biggest wolf and knelt in front.

“I’m Will,” he said as he put his right hand forward.

The greyish wolf sniffed his hand before standing up and turning to its pack. The rest of the pack slowly started walking around. They seemed completely comfortable around Will now. One after the other they started fading but only the big wolf stayed. Will pet him behind its ears with a smile.

“Will I be seeing you guys around?”

The wolf licked his face before running away into the trees. Only the stag was left.

“You found a good group,” Will smiled as he stood up next to the stag.

The two walked back to the village in a comfortable silence. Will turned to the stag once he was close to the village perimeters.

“They’ll probably freak out if they see me talking to the air,” Will whispered with a smile.

He petted the stag on its neck and smiled widely before turning around and walking back to the village.

Us…

Helping…

Will froze as he heard the words in his head. He turned to the stag with wide eyes.

“Did you just…”

Ask…

Us…

“I can hear you; you want to help me… You and the wolves?”

Us…

Helping…

You…

Time…

Comes…

“You’ll help me when the time comes.”

Ask…

“I just need to ask.”

The stag took a few steps back before bowing its head and disappearing. Will had heard the stag speak inside his head. How could he do that? That was impossible. He felt his right hand burn for a moment and stared at it. Taking off the bandage he watched the mark shine with power. Was this his power? He thought his abilities were befriending wild animals, but could he hear them to? Was that part of it? He put back the bandage before walking back to the house, he needed to tell Hannibal.

…

Night came one after the other and the village waited. Villagers from different households were definitely starting to feel wary and an uneasy feeling hung low in the air. The remaining of the snow was slowly melting, and the water was getting warmer.

Hannibal had cut his hair and beard which made him look less homeless and more like royalty in a way. Will thought he would have minded more, but it suited the man, so he smiled and kissed the man’s clean cheek once he was done. It took a bit longer for Hannibal to ask to trim Will’s beard and hair a little bit. The younger man agreed and let Hannibal tidy his look.

The two also took long walks into the forest to practice using Will’s newfound powers. They would sit down, and Will would call upon the stag and wolves. They would play and Will would try and talk to them. He didn’t hear voices after the first time which saddened him a little bit.

It was during a warm night that new ships were seen on the horizon and everyone knew who was on it. The news came quickly throughout the village and people started hiding the children and telling Hannibal and Will to leave for the forest. The bravest villagers stood on guard and waited for the ship to arrive. The moon was high in the sky and there were no clouds above them. The calm before the storm they could say.

“This is all my fault…” Will whispered as they walked further into the forest.

“Not true,” Hannibal replied as he stopped walking. He caressed Will’s cheek and pressed a soft kiss to his lips. “None of this is your fault, understand?”

“If I surrender, they will stop, you’ll be able to keep going on your journey,” Will explained as his eyes watered slowly.

“And leave you behind? Not in a million years, my love.”

Will lowered his head and let out a long sigh. “If it comes down to it… save yourself okay?”

“Will…”

“Promise me.”

Hannibal shook his head. “I won’t do that.”

A single tear ran down Will's face and he brushed it off quickly. He started walking again, his head low. "Let's just go…"

The two made their way further into the woods with finding the boat the villagers had built on the other side of the island as their objective. It was dark and even with the moonlight they had difficulties navigating between the trees. Will knew that they had to be close. The island wasn't that big.

"Where do you think we should go when we get on the boat?" Will asked as he pushed through branches.

"We'll go around and get to the mainland again. When Crawford won't be looking, we will leave for new lands."

"You make it sound so easy…"

The two arrived close to shore after a while and Hannibal stopped Will in his tracks. "Hold on, do you hear that?" he asked in a whisper.

"No."

"Listen."

"Get them!" a deep angry voice screamed out of nowhere.

"He wasn't on the boat… Jack wasn't on the boat," Will said quickly. "What do we do?"

"Survive," Hannibal hissed as he ran towards the men standing on the shore.

"Wait!" Will shouted at him before taking a look around him to see if there were men behind him.

He ran after Hannibal but stopped halfway. The older man was tearing into people, his teeth piercing their skin or his blades cutting through them like butter. Blood was flying, creating fountains as men fell to the ground screaming and clutching their neck. Will saw Jack before Hannibal and shouted. It made Hannibal turn quickly and avoid an attack, but it also gave away his position which sent the last guards after him while Hannibal dealt with Jack. Will tried his best to fight against the four guards but they were quickly gaining the upper hand. They threw him on the ground, started kicking and punching him as Hannibal shouted his name. Will could barely see; he was feeling himself becoming weaker by the second.

"Will! Call them!" he heard before another kick knocked the air out of him. He closed his eyes and tried to concentrate of his animal friends. Tears of pain fell to the ground as he whispered their names one after the other.

A blue light appeared from the trees as the ground shook. Trees gave way to what seemed like an army. Wolves jumped on the guards and began tearing through them one by one. The stag ran towards the group its antlers on fire and charged at Crawford. Jack backed off a little bit before the biggest wolves of them all charged faster and grabbed Jack by the neck and pulled him toward the denser forest. A pool of blood surrounded them as Will raised his head.

Beaten and bruised Hannibal walked to Will and with the help of the stag managed to get him onto Crawford small ship. Hannibal set sail, leaving the island behind. Leaving Crawford to his faith and clutching Will close to him making sure he was stable. He watched as the blue light joined into a glow that reached Will's body. It circled him and enveloped his body.

Jack Crawford was dealt with… for now. Right now, the important thing was to get Will to safety. He started sailing south and west until he finally hit land after days of sailing and living on small rations. The glow never left Will's body and from what Hannibal could see, he was slowly healing. After securing the boat, Hannibal grabbed Will in his arms and walked away from the boat. Only when he reached the city did his body gave out from under him and he fell onto the ground. He clutched Will to him and waited for anyone to find them. At least they had made it… They were in England.

Chapter End Notes

I'm dividing this story in two parts. Will's Arc and Hannibal's Arc. This is the end of Will's Arc which is more Will-centric. Next will be more Hannibal-centric.

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